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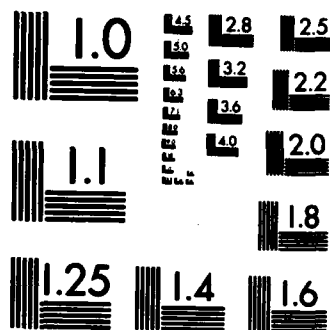
PAKISTAN'S SEARCH FOR A FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE
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Columbia University
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AFGHANISTAN

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I. In December, 1979, Soviet troops crossed into Afghanistan and installed a leader of Moscow's choice in place of Hafizullah Amin. It was the first time Soviet troops had been committed outside the Warsaw Pact area, and involved them in a country which for over a century had been recognized as a buffer state between the Russian realm and the powers of South Asia. Already the geostrategic situation in the region had been dramatically disrupted by the revolution in Iran which ejected the Shah and brought in a band of religious zealots who quickly dismantled the Shah's proud army and state structure. Now, the superpower nearest the subcontinent had left the Hindukush, the natural barrier historically considered the dividing line between the steppes to the north and the subcontinent to the south. Invasions of the subcontinent for thousands of years had come this way.

The United States reacted promptly to these events. But the states one would have expected to have been most directly affected--India and Pakistan--reacted more cautiously. Overnight, so to speak, in the eyes of Washington, Pakistan became a "front line" state, now sharing a thirteen hundred mile frontier with the state the Soviet Union sought to control. (1)

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As the American President saw it, Soviet success in Afghanistan would pose a great danger to "the region as a whole." Some years earlier Washington had quietly acquiesced in the British withdrawal from the Gulf with hardly a demur; following the collapse of the Shah and the Soviet move into Afghanistan, President Carter considered the Persian Gulf as a "vital interest" of the United States and committed the country to employ military force if necessary to defend it. (2)

↓ This essay seeks to reconstruct Pakistan governmental perceptions of its foreign policy situation following the Soviet invasion. Necessarily speculative, it considers Pakistan's bill of constraints and limited options as Islamabad sought to define a response to the Soviet invasion that best served its interests. Its actions have often seemed to American observers half-hearted. But it can be argued that the government's policy of limited liability made the most of a much worsened security situation, which at the outset its neighbors did little to improve,

a) How much change?

In one sense, the Soviet presence in Afghanistan transformed the geo-strategic situation of Pakistan. Instead of being buffered by the mountains, deserts and ravines of Afghanistan, which for so long had separated the Soviet realm from the sub-continent, Pakistan could now face Soviet troops virtually anywhere along the thirteen hundred miles frontier and the shadow of Soviet power now hung over the whole of the sub-continent as never before.

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Within months of the invasion, Pakistan received a flood of refugees and was subject to periodic Soviet violations of Pakistan airspace and even a few incidents of buzzing refugee camps well within Pakistan's borders.

And yet in another sense, so little changed at first! Since perception counts for much in South Asian international politics as elsewhere, a notable aspect of the post-invasion period was the persistence of perceptions familiar twenty years before.⁽³⁾ For instance, early Indian reactions suggested we were back in the 1950's, and that it appeared to make little difference to New Delhi's foreign policy establishment whether Russian troops stood on the Amu Darya or the Khyber.⁽⁴⁾ Both Pakistani and Indian troop dispositions changed but little and even into 1982 private conversations in both Islamabad and New Delhi sounded all-too familiar, echoing discourse heard over the past twenty-five years.⁽⁵⁾

What considerations lay behind Islamabad's approach to this new situation? What were its options, however limited? Where could it find support that would do more good than harm? How could it deal with the Afghan freedom movement, the refugees and the Soviet Union?

b) The Bhutto Foreign Policy Legacy:

Since the 1971 dismemberment of Pakistan, Mr. Bhutto had actively sought intimacy with the states of the Gulf and farther Middle East and associated his country with the Group of 77

at the United Nations and the Non-Aligned. By hosting the Islamic Conference in Lahore in 1972, making service men of all ranks and specialists in finance, management and technical skills available to the Gulf states, and by adopting obligatory pro-Arab positions on Arab-Israeli issues, he had demonstrated Pakistan's utility to the Arab states. He also maintained close relations with the Shah. His problems in Baluchistan were in part the result of having followed the Shah's advice to bear down hard on the NAP government in Baluchistan and NWFP; and he had obtained from Teheran an explicit commitment of security assistance in case of need as well as price concessions on Iranian oil.⁽⁶⁾ He also welcomed quiet Iranian influence in Kabul to encourage Daoud to bury the hatchet on the Pukhtunistan issue. For these gains he had to sacrifice his earlier enthusiasm for Colonel Qadaffi, but he must have considered all this a bargain. His zeal to develop a nuclear capability had further alienated Washington, but downgrading his connection with the United States helped him gain acceptance among the Non-Aligned.

Ayub had already opened a relationship to China in the mid-60's, and Pakistani regimes had profited from that relationship ever since. Diplomatic support for Pakistan came from Beijing at the U.N. and elsewhere. China, Islamabad believed, acted to deter possible Indian pressures against it; it withheld recognition from Bangladesh until India released Pakistanis held as POW's.

A modest flow of military assistance helped slow Pakistan's gradual decline in comparison to India's growing capability. The China connection had been carefully nursed during Bhutto's rule.⁽⁷⁾

From the time of the Simla Agreement in 1972, Indo-Pakistan relations had generally been less acerbic than had been typical between these two neighbors. Once the original parameters of the new relationship had been staked out, inconspicuous efforts between professionals had sought to reduce frictions; the Indians reassured Pakistan that it was not encouraging disruptive activities in Baluchistan and NWFP; Pakistan appeared almost ready to publicly forego its hopes on Kashmir. With the Janata government in 1977, there was a flurry of fresh diplomatic efforts, and serious economic exchanges were negotiated for the first time.⁽⁸⁾

When Bhutto's overly zealous election-fixing provoked severe internal upheavals and led to one more army takeover in 1977, Pakistan's foreign policy was already diversified and far less confrontational against India than one had come to expect from Mr. Bhutto's earlier positions.

Relations with Afghanistan, too, were improving.⁽⁹⁾ With the Shah's encouragement, Daoud had been persuaded to drop his agitation on behalf of Pukhtunistan, and he and Bhutto had exchanged visits. In March 1978, a month before the bloody coup that overthrew Daoud, Zia, Bhutto's successor, had even welcomed Daoud to Rawalpindi to dramatize continuity in easing the old

quarrel. Taraki and Amin quickly took up the old Pukhtunistan cry once more, a sure sign of trouble ahead.⁽¹⁰⁾

In less than a year after Daoud's overthrow, the collapse of the Shah in January, 1979 dramatically worsened Pakistan's security situation. Instead of seeing a stable, well-armed conservative Shah to the West, playing a moderating role in Indo-Pakistan relations and providing a presumptive support in the event of trouble, Islamabad watched helplessly as authority disintegrated in Teheran. Even conceivable United States' backing through the Teheran connection was no longer available. Instead, puritanical religious enthusiasts possibly linked to the Tudeh party were destroying the army and attempting to put together a regime perhaps to be dominated by Shiite religious zealots. In effect, the Khomeini revolution had not only destroyed the Shah's regime as a security asset for Pakistan to the west; Shiite exuberance might provoke religious disorders from within Pakistan itself.

II. THE SOVIET INVASION

On top of that, in December, 1979 the Soviets moved into Afghanistan. Better plugged into developments in Afghanistan than most governments in the area, the Pakistanis were well aware of the growing resistance against the Taraki and Amin

regimes. They were therefore less surprised at the Soviet move than most.

Opinions were divided, however, on its implications. The optimists considered the Soviet move a response to the deteriorating condition of the Amin government and an essentially defensive effort to retain Afghanistan within the Soviet "scientific socialist" sphere. Others saw it more ominously, as a major step in the "known" long run Soviet "plan" to penetrate Baluchistan and advance to the Arabian sea.⁽¹¹⁾ Those who had worried most about the ethnic tensions within Pakistan suspected Soviet and Afghan efforts to organize Baluch dissidents, who had many reasons of their own for resentment, for they believed Baluchistan was not receiving due recognition as a full-fledged province within Pakistan. The external threat was thus compounded by internal ethnic politics to complicate Pakistan's security problem.⁽¹²⁾ The policy problem, however, was how to respond?

Thousands of refugees sought sanctuary in Pakistan from Soviet air raids--Islamabad could not have closed that permeable frontier had it wanted to. It drew on the government's credentials among the Non-Aligned to evoke strong protests through the United Nations from virtually all non-aligned associates and all the major powers. More consequential in Pakistani eyes, the Islamic Conference meeting in Islamabad in January, 1980 protested almost with one voice, speaking for the whole Islamic world; only Syria, Libya and South Yemen dissenting.⁽¹³⁾ Given Pakistan's

geo-political situation and inherent constraints, however, Islamabad could shape no prudent policy without extensive consultations with neighboring and more distant states. As a result, President Zia's principal foreign policy advisor, Agha Shahi undertook prompt consultation in many capitals.

III. ALTERNATIVES?

a) Mend Fences with India?

One logical option was to attempt to mend fences with India. Relations had worsened with India since General Zia had taken power. The Government of India had long expressed its preference for representative government in Islamabad, and had appealed to the generals to spare Mr. Bhutto. One view of geo-political logic, nevertheless, would have recommended to Pakistan a closer association with its much larger neighbor to the east. It is frivolous, some argued, to consider defending the sub-continent from Soviet encroachment without the cooperation of India. Now is the time, they believed, to restrain the chauvinists in Pakistan's Punjab, who were alleged to persist in seeing India as the major enemy, and more actively to seek an acceptable accommodation with the Indians. (14)

On the other hand, fear of Indo-Soviet collusion had long been prevalent among Islamabad's military planners and many public figures. India's 1971 venture against East Pakistan within months after the conclusion of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship lent credence to that fear. Moreover, India had never been able to suggest to Pakistan a long run relationship within the

assumption of India's preeminence that seemed acceptable. (15)

When Agha Shahi visited New Delhi in January, 1980, although a serious public debate was beginning, he reportedly found little evidence that India's rulers shared Pakistan's new apprehensions precipitated by both the Shah's collapse and the invasion of Afghanistan. Indeed, during the January debate at the United Nations, the new Indira Gandhi government had gone so far as to justify the Soviet invasion as a defensive response to the activities of "certain foreign powers," implying American and Pakistan responsibility for the Soviet venture. This surprising position shocked many of India's non-aligned friends. To be sure, it may have been more a quasi-automatic response of a regime whose leaders were exhausted from the electoral campaign just completed than the result of a reasoned analysis of these unprecedented events. Indeed, by the end of February, New Delhi had publicly criticized the Soviet government for its presence in Afghanistan. But the Gandhi government did little to reassure Islamabad in its worsened security situation.

To some extent, experienced Pakistani officials understood India's reluctance. After all, over 70% of India's armaments still came from Russia, and for years Moscow had regularly supported Delhi's positions in international fora; trade relations were also important. To acknowledge a markedly changed geo-strategic situation would raise serious questions about India's future security policy. Would India be likely to jeopardize its relationship with the Soviet Union for the sake of standing

shoulder to shoulder with its traditional regional opponent? Moreover, Delhi could well prefer a "secular" Afghanistan under Soviet control to a religiously zealous Afghanistan which might excite Muslims throughout South Asia.

In New Delhi, President Carter's abrupt volte-face by offering military assistance to Pakistan conjured up at first a return to the close US-Pakistan relationship of the mid-1950's; this obviously called for strong public protests in Delhi designed to make both Washington and Islamabad think twice. According to official and media protest, the still hypothetical contingency of a return of the Americans appeared more urgent to New Delhi than the already very real presence of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Indeed, there were even some who argued that the renewed American connection with Pakistan might justify Delhi in even welcoming a Soviet presence on Pakistan's eastern frontier, perceived by these observers as the best guarantee against Pakistani revanchism. (16

As a result, the Government of India offered little reassurance in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet invasion; skeptical Pakistanis could therefore easily conjure up their worst anxieties - Indo-Soviet collusion to take all of Azad Kashmir should a propitious moment come. Nevertheless, while India complained vigorously and publicly about the American offer to help Pakistan, it did protest diplomatically to the Soviet Union about its invasion, and Indian and Pakistani officials maintained an inconspicuous dialogue, the one hoping New Delhi might come to be more helpful, the other in the hope of dissuading Pakistan from repeating an earlier strategy of going too far with the Americans.

b) What of the Carter United States?

One obvious alternative for Pakistan was to seek the help of the United States. Pakistan's sense of weakness vis-a-vis India had always led it to seek balancing assistance from outside if it could, and the United States had greatly improved Pakistan's military capability in the mid-1950's. Perhaps Washington might be helpful again.⁽¹⁷⁾ The day after the invasion, President Carter had promptly telephoned President Zia and offered help.⁽¹⁸⁾ Elements in the Pakistan military were enthusiastic about the possibility of renewing the American connection. For those with long memories, President Carter's subsequent sweeping commitment in the State of the Union message to defend the Gulf might well presage an end to America's apparent disinterest in the affairs of South Asia. It might also provide Pakistan a lever to lift the virtual American quarantine installed because of Mr. Bhutto's nuclear program which had only been intensified by General Zia's seizure of power and his government's dubious human rights record.⁽¹⁹⁾

But in the main, the professionals in the Foreign Ministry were less enthusiastic. They were aware of the profound doubts in Washington about once again getting involved in South Asia; Pakistan was not likely to be the Carter administration's favorite overseas partner, and opinion in Washington was divided on the wisdom of coming to depend heavily on Pakistan once again.⁽²⁰⁾ Those Pakistanis with different long memories saw the United States as fundamentally unreliable. They recalled how in their

perception, the United States had "let Pakistan down" in both the 1965 and 1971 wars with India, despite the agreement of 1959 (which the Americans always said was directed only against the Soviet threat, while Pakistan often read it to apply to the Indian contingency as well). Political figures such as Askar Khan and spokesmen for the PPP warned against ties that could not be relied upon. (21)

Accordingly, when the American offer of \$400 million was made in February, it confirmed the view of the specialists in Islamabad that the United States should not be taken seriously. Even though Washington said the \$400 million was only a first installment, who could be sure? Why should Pakistan run the risk of associating with the United States, inviting thereby criticism from the radical left, religious criticism from those inspired by the Iranian revolution and perhaps diplomatic or even direct cross-border pressure from Moscow, when all the U.S. was willing to offer was "peanuts"? Instead, Zia rejected the offer out of hand, and for the next nine months pursued a policy of verbal boldness at the United Nations and with his Islamic brethren but caution on the frontier.

In retrospect, one may look back and wonder whether a real opportunity was missed during these nine months. A very different conjuncture might have developed on the sub-continent. Zia's rejection of the American offer might have been seen in New Delhi as proof that Islamabad was not about to drag the United States back into the sub-continent, as Ayub was accused of having

done in the mid-1950's. Quiet but firm reassurance by the Gandhi government, such as some visible troop redeployments away from the Pakistan frontier, and public sympathy for Islamabad's new situation could have given public confirmation that New Delhi understood Pakistan's worsened security position and underlined Indian goodwill. Such a move need not have troubled India's relations with Moscow, but it might have made a substantial difference in Islamabad. To be sure, such policy flexibility is difficult when domestic opponents are ready to pounce on signs of consideration for the worries of an old antagonist. Bureaucracies often miss opportunities; military men dislike inconvenience brought upon them by diplomatic considerations. And the signals out of Islamabad were somewhat mixed, as well. Nevertheless, there was time enough to reconsider old policies; but the occasion appears to have been missed.

Islamabad could see the Carter administration's new desire to demonstrate a firm response to this fresh evidence of Soviet adventurism; and President Zia had taken a bold stand at the U.N. and the Islamic Conference from the beginning. Yet, in view of India's unwillingness to be helpful and the vulnerability resulting from the Shah's demise and the Soviet invasion, the Pakistanis could not help but wonder aloud, when in earshot of Americans, just how long Islamabad would be able to stand firm against Soviet blandishments if it did not receive substantial support from somewhere. In Washington, Pakistanis argued that only a formal Mutual Security Treaty (which would require Senate con-

currence) would induce Pakistan to become an active ally of America's new containment effort. Knowledgeable Pakistanis must have understood the small likelihood of such an American commitment at that time--the Vietnam syndrome still persisted and Pakistan's nuclear ambitions and uncertain human rights record were not likely to make that politically easy for the hard-pressed Carter administration. (22) In any event, some feared that such intimacy with the United States might require a radical increase in Pakistani assistance to the mujahadeen, a step Mr. Gromyko warned Islamabad against when he visited New Delhi in February, 1980; it would also risk isolating Pakistan from the Non-Aligned and important moderate Arabs who had spoken so forthrightly and voted so overwhelmingly with Pakistan at the Islamic Conference and at the United Nations.

But the Government of Pakistan had other alternatives.

c) The Middle East

Unlike Ayub and Yahya, Zia had in the Islamic world of the Gulf a source of support they had not had. After 1973, the states of the Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, could now provide a level of financial assistance hitherto unimaginable. And the dependence of western European states as well as the United States on Gulf energy provided the oil producers with diplomatic influence they had previously lacked.

As pointed out above, the Zia government had certain assets in the Middle East. A substantial number of senior Pakistani financial officials and administrators were serving in the Gulf. Zia was known for his staunch support of King Hussein while stationed in Jordan at the time of the expulsion of the PLO in 1970. Pakistani officers, pilots, aircraft maintenance teams, logistical specialists served in a number of states. Pakistanis bolster the police force in Bahrain and Oman.⁽²³⁾ Being non-Arab, they are trusted for their detachment from Arab politics, unlike the Egyptians, Palestinians, or even the Lebanese who it is said, never can leave politics alone. Over one million Pakistan citizens labored in the Gulf and sent home over \$2 billion in remittances, Pakistan's largest single source of foreign exchange. Moreover, compared to the seven million citizens in Saudi Arabia and the miniscule Emirates, Pakistan loomed as a major regional power. So long as it adequately coped with its own domestic and security problems, Pakistan could be a source of reliable predicability on the eastern marches of the Gulf. On the other hand, disintegration in Pakistan would profoundly worsen the politico-strategic environment in the Gulf, already suffering destabilization by the storms in Iran and the Soviet intrusion into Afghanistan.

The Saudi Connection

Of all Pakistan's alternatives, the Saudi connection remained the most obscure; on the other hand, it may be among the most important. It is widely believed Saudi assistance is sub-

stantial in the form of funding for arms purchases on the international market, in concessional credits for petroleum imports, for developmental investment in Pakistan itself and through construction and other contract opportunities for Pakistani firms in Saudi Arabia.⁽²⁴⁾ It is also assumed that Riyadh strongly supported the Pakistan case in Washington as the aid package was being assembled and debated.

The Saudi connection has its problems, however. For one thing, decisions from Riyadh may be excruciatingly slow; so are the follow-on steps to implement them. The Saudi system moves by consensus among a number of senior family leaders and top administrators. The decision system is highly secretive; it is reportedly hard to influence from outside.⁽²⁵⁾ Moreover, Saudi subsidies and assistance transfers, though large when they come, reportedly do not follow a regular pattern but arrive sporadically, in a way that cannot be counted on and sometimes only when specific budgetary items are at a most acute stage. On the other hand, all this has the virtue of being highly discreet and inconspicuous; there is no public embarrassment such as is nearly inevitable when dealing with major arms purchases from the United States.⁽²⁶⁾

For Pakistan, the Islamic Middle East is more than Saudi Arabia and the Emirates; Iran is also important. Following the revolution in Iran, it was not easy to have constructive relations with both Riyadh and Teheran. Zia attempted all along to retain connections with the Teheran leadership, though these relationships have been difficult and unpredictable. Reportedly

there are contacts regarding problems in Baluchistan; there may be exchanges of information on security matters, on developments in Afghanistan and on the indirect Pakistan-Soviet negotiations.

At the same time, Zia's popular support at home remained limited, and religious agitation inspired from Iran could well spill over into Pakistan. The Shia population may be between ten and twenty per cent; more Shias appeared since the revolution than had been assumed before it. Some key figures in the Pakistan establishment have Shia affiliations. But the bulk of the establishment--the bureaucracy, the army and business community--are Sunni religious moderates. The mosques have been centers of agitation on behalf of "Islamic values" and of leading the pious life. Here as elsewhere, the religiously zealous often have closer relationships with the rural and urban poor than have the bureaucrats, the businessmen and the officers. To criticize the secular tendencies of Bhutto's regime was easy enough. More difficult was shaping a consensus on what would be the necessary elements of the truly Islamic polity in the 1980's. To satisfy foreign critics in Iran might alienate Riyadh, and vice versa; and responding to the urgings of either could alienate--or mobilize--important groups at home. Moreover, diverse shades of Islamic opinion, if activated, could provoke serious disorders as they contend for public support. Shia demonstrations against Zakat obligations in 1981 were a vivid object lesson. (27)

The delicacy of Gulf politics provided President Zia with an opportunity--as well as some risk. When the Iran-Iraq war broke out, Zia happened to be President of the Islamic Conference, which immediately sought to mediate an end to the conflict that split the oil producers, threatened peace in the Gulf, distracted attention from the Arab-Israeli conflict in the west and might open Iran to Soviet penetration. Mediation often enhances the influence of the mediator while negotiations are in train, as the United States discovered after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. But mediation may also backfire, both sides becoming angry at the mediator if the effort fails or one becomes embittered if the mediator's weight is seen to bear more heavily in favor of the other. Mediation is difficult enough; how much more delicate it must be when a number of heads of state are engaged together; as was the case at the start of the Islamic Conference's effort. (28)

To go along with Iran's territorial claims against Iraq's unilateral efforts to change them by force would seem to acquiesce in the Iranian religious agitation within Iraq and imply approval of Shia religious agitation in neighboring countries; to even implicitly question Iranian religious agitation in Iraq risked alienating Iran and might possibly even trigger religious excitement within Pakistan itself. So long as Zia was President of the Islamic Conference, he emerged unscathed from this challenge, and enhanced his standing in the eyes of the Gulf States, however meager were the mediatory results.

d) And China?

From the time of Ayub's opening to China, Beijing had been a diplomatic help to Islamabad. As Islamabad saw it, its mere presence balanced India, and required Delhi to devote substantial efforts to develop its border road system and maintain substantial forces along the northern and eastern frontier. China had supplemented Pakistan's American equipment in the late 1960's, and as the American arms embargo persisted, China became an increasingly important supplier. By the late 1970's, it was calculated that Pakistan had more than 1,000 Chinese T-59 tanks or 75% of its tank park and some 300 planes, perhaps 65% of its airforce, from China. One hundred forty-four of them were MIG-19's/F-6 forming with French Mirage 3's and Mirage V's the backbone of the air force.⁽²⁹⁾ China also constructed a tank rebuild factory and improved a light arms plant and a repair facility for the M16-19/F-6's at Kamra near Taxila. It undertook substantial road-building efforts in the Sinkiang, Karakoram area, opening the remarkable Karakoram Highway over the Kunjerab pass. With these concrete evidences of Chinese support, it had also regularly stood by Pakistan diplomatically whenever it got into difficulties with India.

But could China really be counted on to assist Pakistan if it came into conflict with the Soviet Union on the Afghan frontier? Would China risk engaging the Soviet Union in Sinkiang to draw off Soviet resources from Afghanistan and the Pakistan frontier. Surely, the imbalance of capability between the Soviet Union and China would lead Beijing to play a cautious

hand in such contingencies. Some noted that both the Chinese and their Soviet counterparts usually made threatening noises on behalf of their respective South Asian clients only when the danger of involvement was manifestly passed. And Chinese policy had the worrisome quality of veering sharply from one extreme to another; the breathtaking switch from Mao's cultural revolution to Deng's opening to the West could be reversed one day.

One could, therefore, expect quiet support from China, with a continued flow of military resources up to China's technological and productive capability. Its leaders did not need to win public support from an elected Congress, so they might be steadier than the United States in a crisis. And it would no doubt stand by Pakistan at the United Nations and in other diplomatic arenas. By itself, however, China would not be likely to initiate the use of force against the Soviet Union even in the face of possible Soviet intrusions into the Northwest Frontier Province, Gilgit or Hunza.

In sum, General Zia had been able to build on the Bhutto legacy; the new threat from Afghanistan justified his Islamic neighbors in helping in a major way; and the China connection held firm. In the United States, the November 1980 election eased his problems in another way, for the Reagan administration proved less concerned over the character of Pakistan's domestic politics than the Carter administration, and non-proliferation

was considerably lower on the new Administration's priorities than bolstering Pakistan's military capability.

e) Military and Economic Assistance from the U.S.

The F-16 deal and \$3 billion aid perhaps would make an excellent case study in how to negotiate with the United States from a position of "weakness." By having played hard-to-get under the Carter administration, the Zia government was in a strong position vis-a-vis its successor. Moreover, the Reagan administration saw it as urgent to signal to Moscow and others that unlike its predecessor, it could make hard security decisions and get on with supporting its friends. Early on, Pakistan defined its requirement for the latest aircraft with a usable life of twenty years; the cheaper, less versatile and less advanced F-5G simply would not do. Even though it might be more useful in the Afghan arena, it was not versatile enough to cover all Pakistani contingencies.⁽³⁰⁾ At the same time, the Senatorial legislation regarding non-proliferation meant that a good deal of the congressional debate focused on how to deal with the Symington Amendment that related to Pakistan's efforts to develop a reprocessing facility, rather than the merits of the sale of the F-16's or the substance of the aid package itself. In the end, the administration was authorized to sell Pakistan the F-16's for cash, commercial credits were to be guaranteed for the \$1.5 billion worth of other military equipment, and \$1.5 billion balance in economic assistance was also approved.

The implications of the arrangement for American relations with India were part of the debate, though hardly central to the discussion. Any serious concern for the defense of Pakistan obviously would require the cooperation of India. Early in the American discussion with Pakistan, it became apparent to both parties that a return to the old and intimate alliance relationship of the 1950's was out of the question. The Americans were not willing; but neither were the Pakistanis. The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Agha Shahi neatly epitomized the new relationship as "a handshake not an embrace."⁽³¹⁾ It implied a readiness to cooperate on specific issues and to face together certain understood contingencies. It permitted the large distant power to provide some support without disturbing the recipient's own balance of interests and alternative options. It carried few of the implications of unquestioning backing in a range of unspecified contingencies that had so misled both participants in the 1950's.

Once these limits became understood, the worst fears of the Indian government were somewhat allayed. Before they were clear, however, early reactions in New Delhi to the Carter offer had been vigorous. Indian publicists had been particularly bitter, fearing a replay of the 1950's. New Delhi did not stand in the way of the Pakistanis receiving the aid package, however. And both the Reagan administration and the Gandhi governments recognized the wisdom of improving relations.

As a result, Mrs. Gandhi visited Washington in August of 1982 giving a clear impression of wishing to diversify her options. The contentious issue of nuclear fuels was passed to the French. Moscow's sensitivity to her new flexibility was quickly demonstrated when Defense Minister Ustinov and thirty (!) generals rushed to New Delhi with fresh offers of defense collaboration,⁽³²⁾ and enhanced trade arrangements. New Delhi picked up some of the Soviet offers, but Mrs. Gandhi appeared determined to maintain a more diversified policy.

f) Evolving Indo-Pakistani Relations

It proved no easier after 1980 than before to accurately assess the trend of relations between India and Pakistan. As pointed out above, one view of geo-strategic logic would argue that both countries' position on the sub-continent would be well served if they could collaborate more closely in the face of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Thornton noted that even after the invasion "Pakistan remained aggravatingly preoccupied with the historic threat from the east to the detriment of common effort vis-a-vis the more real Soviet danger."⁽³³⁾ The same could be said about India's persisting worry about Pakistan's real intentions. To be sure, as the Soviet occupation persisted, Islamabad and India appeared to move haltingly toward at least a more regularized consultation. But the movement looked not unlike an all-too familiar minuet.

In the autumn of 1981, for example, Zia took the initiative and offered a "No War" pact to India, a virtual replica of an

of an Indian proposal first offered in 1949, repeated numerous times thereafter, and regularly rejected by Pakistan as meaningless. Zia's offer could have been intended as an attempt to meet India more than half-way, by initiating what had been an Indian proposal in the first place. But under the circumstances, it was considered in New Delhi as a clever ploy to put Pakistan in a good light with the American Congress then gearing up to debate aspects of the Pakistan aid package. India countered with a proposal for a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, a phrasing more in keeping with India's agreements with other states. And the two states swapped texts in a search for possible language that would reflect the different mix each wanted between expressions of reassurance and good will toward the other without implying specific commitments that might inhibit its own freedom of action.

When New Delhi expressed understandable anxiety about Pakistan's nuclear program, Zia countered with an offer to establish a Nuclear Free Zone, a proposal India had once espoused early on in an effort to inhibit China, but one which it would predictably oppose now since that would require opening Indian facilities to international inspection.

Periodically, impatient Pakistani figures publicly mentioned the unfinished business of Kashmir. The Indians argued that the Simla Agreement had redefined that as one of those issues the two should deal with bi-laterally, and therefore such public airing of

the issue ran counter to solemn undertakings. And at a time when the Zia government was facing severe disorders in Sindh, it could hardly have been seen as helpful in Islamabad for Mrs. Gandhi to comment publicly on India's preference for democratic governments in Pakistan.

Indeed, it is as if the principals on both sides simply cannot refrain from touching each others' raw nerves, like siblings who have lived too long in cramped quarters. Whether the difficulties derive from the bitterness of years of inter-communal suspicion, thirty-five years of conflicted inter-state relations, or the imperative need of hard-pressed leaders to evoke public support by calling up reliable xenophobic emotions is hard to say.

Regardless of the substantive limitations of these proposals, however, each required a quiet, inconspicuous follow-up. And out of it all has emerged at least a joint Indo-Pakistan Commission. This is designed to institutionalize regular consultations to facilitate trade, cultural and press exchanges, and to ease pilgrimage travel. Thus, out of rather grandiloquent proposals in the end may come some concrete measures to ease the frustrations of individuals and groups whose politically innocent activities have been blocked for years.

IV. AND POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIETS IN AFGHANISTAN?

With Pakistan's assessment of its international assets and constraints and its approach to the United States, the Gulf, China and India in mind, we now turn to the debate within Pakistan on how to deal with the Soviet presence. Regional and distant

friends are important, and it is well to minimize antagonism of a large neighbor if possible. But the really difficult question has been what policy to follow toward the conflict in Afghanistan? Views have varied. (34)

Some have argued that to act like a "front line state" can be risky. According to this view, the Russians are clearly there to stay; Pakistan should therefore return to the policies of the late 1960's and seek some kind of accommodation with Moscow. This could strengthen Islamabad in dealing with India, since Moscow might well downgrade its relationship with India in order to lure Pakistan, while such a policy would be likely to reduce the threat to Pakistan from the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Instead of seeking to balance the power of India and Russia with uncertain support from outsiders, better to climb on the regional bandwagon. The Russians have offered to recognize the Durand Line and promised that the government in Kabul will do the same, possibly finally exorcising the Pukhtunisan issue from Pakistan's internal politics. As the Russians argue, such an accommodation could open the way to linking Pakistan into a larger South Asia economic network. But critics reply: that would lock Pakistan irretrievably into a Soviet dominated trade and security area; with Moscow's ally in Delhi immediately to the east, Pakistan could be perceived as being truly cornered.

An alternative course would call for much more vigorous assistance to the Afghan freedom fighters. This school argues that only if the Russians are truly hard pressed in Afghanistan will

the cost of remaining there rise enough to induce them to leave. The Russians could indefinitely put up with the level of resistance of the first three years, when their forces controlled the cities and necessary arteries between them as needed, while the rest of the country remained in the hands of the freedom fighters. Periodic raids into mujahadeen strongholds could bring heavy casualties to the population; over a five-year period young men would either leave or die; the Russians could stay the course quite long enough in effect to win. Only if the resistance was materially helped from outside, as the North Vietnamese received help from Moscow and Beijing, this line argues, can the cost to Moscow be enough to drive them out.

This policy has the liability that it risks embroiling Pakistan in a direct confrontation with Moscow. And experience in Pakistan's previous conflicts suggests that if its own activities precipitated such a conflict, Pakistan might well have to bear the brunt alone. Washington would scarcely be likely to risk taking on the Soviets that far away around the world in an effort to save Pakistan from risks its own initiatives had provoked.

In the end, the government of Zia al Huk chose a course of limited liability. It had four main elements.

1) Strong Public Condemnation

The first strand was strong public condemnation of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan; rallying overwhelming Non-Aligned as

well as OECD votes at the United Nations. But more important to Islamabad has been the virtually united voice of the Islamic Conference, convened in Islamabad in January, 1980 and periodically since then in different capitals. Because of the United States connection with Israel, the Soviet Union had made much of its support to the Muslim Middle East. But here almost the whole Muslim world, including even most of Moscow's radical Arab friends spoke out against its invasion of a fellow Muslim country. It was no doubt disconcerting to the policy community in Moscow to be publicly and universally reminded that its forces were on the wrong side of freedom fighters. The condemnations underline the hostility of virtually the whole Islamic community, which Moscow had done so much to cultivate. More than incidentally, the condemnations give heart to the mujahadeen. Successive meetings of the Islamic Conference have continued the condemnation, but they have gradually increased the stress on the desirability of finding a "political solution."

2) Formal Refusal to be a Conduit

This openly antagonistic posture, however, is moderated by a formal and explicit refusal by the Government to act as a conduit for military supplies to the mujahadeen.⁽³⁵⁾ At the same time, the Government acknowledges that no one can control that permeable frontier! No convoys are to be seen transporting ammunition and military requisites to the frontier. Rather, it is argued, the mujahadeen, after all, are receiving the bulk of

their equipment from the Russian occupiers themselves either by capture or thanks to defecting Afghan troops who come over, sometimes in whole units. Pakistani tribesmen have always been known for their skill in manufacturing from scrap highly sophisticated copies of the more simple advanced weapons. No doubt, too, some filter in via the China-Karakoram highway; there are unconfirmed press reports that Egypt is supplying Soviet weapons and the Saudis are paying the bill.⁽³⁶⁾ Certainly Pakistan, which refuses to be a conduit, cannot be held responsible for this sort of thing.

3) Permit Afghan Political Activity

A third element relates to the Afghans now in Pakistan. The government receives and cares for the refugees as well as possible. It also welcomes representatives of the mujahadeen and allows them to set up political offices in Peshawar. Islamabad attempts to induce the various groups--6,8,20, or however many they are--to collaborate. But the Government has its own considerations. For decades, the Pukhtun majority in Afghanistan has agitated among the 7-10 million Pushtu speakers in the Northwest Frontier province, urging at least more autonomy and at most even secession. Should the 2.8 million refugees now in Pakistan, mainly Pukhtuns, become consolidated into a strong political movement with an eye to effective concerted resistance to the Russian occupation, an unwanted by-product could be renewed agitation within Pakistan itself. Since the "leaders" safely lodged in Peshawar are not likely to carry much weight back home should the

Russians be driven out, they might eventually seek to become a real force within Pakistan.⁽³⁴⁾ On the other hand, should the movement become solidified and go all out against the Russian occupation, that might be the surest recipe for a direct Soviet attack against Pakistan, a moment, some officers fear, India might use to incorporate Azad Kashmir. Accordingly, Pakistan's support seems to refugee leaders half-hearted and at times even divisive. They also recognize, however, that without Pakistan's consent, their political activities, ineffectual as they may be, would not be possible at all, so they remain acquiescent.

4) The Need to Talk-Within Limits

A fourth strand became more prominent in 1982 and the spring of 1983, exploring through "arm's length" negotiations a political settlement which might lead to the departure of Soviet troops. In August, 1981, Secretary Firyubin first visited Islamabad and proposed three cornered talks between Teheran, Kabul and Islamabad. But the Pakistanis rejected that idea, perhaps with encouragement from both Riyadh and Teheran. Later in 1981, Pakistan encouraged the United Nations to appoint a representative to explore the problem of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Moscow opposed that idea, but in February, 1982 it eventually acquiesced in view of the near-universal support the initiative received.

Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary General's Special Representative, took preliminary soundings and proposed talks between

Kabul, Pakistan and Teheran, to stress the shared regional interest in a settlement of the Afghan struggle. Islamabad agreed to indirect talks, making clear that communicating through the Secretary General's good offices in no way implied recognition of the Soviet-implanted Karmal regime. His successor, Diego Cordovez made a number of visits to Kabul, Islamabad, and Teheran, stopping generally in Moscow at the end of each round on his way to New York.

In June, 1982, and in April and June 1983, there were "third party" discussions in Geneva. Four principles were eventually agreed upon between the parties: (a) Russian troop withdrawal; (b) an end to "outside interference" in Afghanistan's affairs, (c) a safe return of the refugees, and (d) international supervision and guarantees of the settlement agreed to. While it is progress to define such a formula as a basis for negotiations,⁽³⁷⁾ by the autumn of 1983 there was still a long way to go.

The Government of Pakistan must move within narrow margins. On the one hand, the Russians are in occupation of Kabul and most other cities, and are not likely to leave unless a regime acceptable to them appears to remain in place. On the other hand, both Muslim fundamentalists and refugees in Pakistan are likely to turn against the Zia regime if it shows insufficient zeal in defending their interests, which in their eyes requires both a Soviet withdrawal and a change of regime in Kabul. Yet, if there is no Soviet withdrawal, the refugees are not likely to go

home but will remain as sources of political unrest within Pakistan. The bulk are within the Northwest Frontier Province, but in Baluchistan the refugee influx is fundamentally altering the ethnic balance of the province.

On the other hand, as pointed out, a sharp increase of support to the freedom fighters with an eye to speeding the departure of the Soviet troops by raising the cost of the occupation risks involving Pakistan in direct conflict with the Soviets. This could risk the very integrity of the country. Even if the results were not that dire, it might require again becoming unduly dependent upon the United States, which would have other liabilities.

In the meantime, however, talks continue. While they persist, they minimize the chances of military confrontation; they hold out promise to the different groups concerned that some acceptable solution may eventually be found. Even if the Russians do not withdraw, Islamabad will have been seen to have done its best to induce them to go. The burden of having refused to compromise will be on Moscow, not Islamabad.

V. CONCLUSION

In sum, the Zia government has thus far followed an adroit and multi-faceted policy. As a state on the Afghan frontier it has faced unavoidable risks; but it has minimized these risks by broadening its international support and dealing with both

India and the Soviet Union with subtlety and minimum provocation. It has not lost its credentials among the Non-Aligned even as it has received substantial commitments of economic assistance and military equipment from the United States. By calling on its Saudi and Gulf Islamic connections it obtains these armaments on terms that minimize both the reality and the appearance of American leverage on its freedom of action.

At the same time it has taken steps to moderate Indian fears. Maintaining a certain distance from Washington makes clear Pakistan is not seeking to involve the United States in regional affairs as in the 1950's. By the autumn of 1983, the quiet dialogue maintained by India and Pakistan continued, and both parties were exploring ways of dealing with specific issues of difference and distrust. For the first time in many years both states seemed able to accept the other's relationship with Washington with good grace. No doubt, Washington's acceptance of Pakistan's posture ^{of limited liability} contributed to this sub-continental result. But in the face of the Soviet presence at the door to the sub-continent, leaders in both states may be haltingly changing their sense of priorities. They were dealing somewhat more constructively with ancient fears and suspicions than in many years.

As to policy toward the Soviet occupation, Pakistan has promoted vigorous--and effective--marshalling of international opinion as registered at the United Nations and the Islamic

Conference in opposition to the Soviet presence; it denied responsibility for any military supplies that might slip undetected across that permeable frontier to the mujahadeen; it assisted but limited the political organization of refugee "representatives" in Peshawar, and it participated in third-party consultations under United Nations auspices to see if some way could be found to induce the Russians to leave. In short, Pakistan's leaders had made the best of a very complicated--and unenviable--situation.

On the other hand, those who had hoped that out of the looming presence of Soviet forces at the gateway to the sub-continent would come a sea change in Indo-Pakistan relations have been disappointed. Ethnic suspicions, thirty-five years of independent existence and three wars, the way leaders have responded to their domestic political imperatives and Soviet policy toward India have dominated the perception that a common threat from Soviet central Asia now challenges both states of the sub-continent.

FOOTNOTES

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12. For an analysis emphasizing ethnic divisions within Pakistan, see Selig Harrison, In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1981).
13. For meetings, see Keesing's Contemporary Archive, May 9, 1980, p. 30241; Aug. 1, 1980, p. 30385.
14. See G. M. Khar's argument to this effect in The London Economist, Oct. 31, 1981. While he was no longer part of the ruling group, his views may well have found sympathy among some thoughtful members of the Pakistan establishment.
15. Interviews, Islamabad, Lahore, and New York, 1980 and 1982.
16. Interviews, New Delhi.
17. Howard Wriggins, "The Balancing Process in Pakistan's Foreign Policy," in L. Ziring, et al, eds., Pakistan: The Long View (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1977P, pp. 301-40.
18. Thornton, op. cit., p. 969.
19. Ibid, pp. passim.
20. Ibid, p. 969.
21. Interviews, New York and Lahore, 1982.
22. Thornton, op. cit., pp. 970-1; author interviews, Washington, spring, 1980 and Islamabad, 1982.
23. See n. 6.
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32. Thornton, "The U.S.S.R. and Asia in 1982: The End of the Brezhnev Era," Asian Survey, Vol. XXIII, 1, pp. 11-25, p. 20.

33. Thornton, "Between the Stools," p. 971.

34. G. M. Khar considers these options. See footnote 14.

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